

Native conversion
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K A P I O L A N I :

A MEMORIAL PREPARED BY

MRS. PERSIS G. TAYLOR,

AND READ BEFORE THE

WOMAN'S BOARD OF MISSIONS

FOR

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NOTE.

*In preparing this sketch. I have quoted from Revs. J. M.
Alexander, C. S. Stewart, H. Bingham, and Mrs. Dr. Judd,*

P. G. T.

KAPIOLANI.

It is hard to realize, in the present age, what it was for the first missionaries, seventy-six years ago, to take up their abode among the natives of these Islands. When the ladies in that company first saw the naked savages in their canoes surrounding the brig "Thaddeus," some of them cried out, "*Can these be human beings? Are they not devils, rather?*" and some of them retired to the cabin to weep.

The owner of a trading vessel, on seeing them land, exclaimed, "These ladies cannot remain here. They will all return to the United States in less than a year." And with kind solicitude for their welfare, he gave orders that his vessel should give them a free passage to the States whenever they should apply.

Afterwards, as one of the pioneer missionaries was walking on the seashore, he saw, sitting on a rock, a large, finely proportioned native woman, saturating her skin, with the fragrant cocoanut oil, and basking in a noonday tropical sun, like a seal or sea elephant.

When first visited by a missionary in her home, she was lying on the mat with her two husbands, all nearly nude, and in a state of beastly intoxication.

This was *Kapiolani*, the "*Heavenly Captive*." She was one of the first to embrace the truths of the Gospel, taught by the early missionaries. The reformation in her character was truly wonderful. Of her two husbands, she chose *Naihe*, who was styled the Counsellor and Orator of the Nation. He was more slow to adopt the new religion, but made no objection to the expressed views of his wife. She was not of the royal family of Kamehameha, but descended from another line of kings. Her father was the great chief Keawemauhili, of Hilo. She was one of the most remarkable

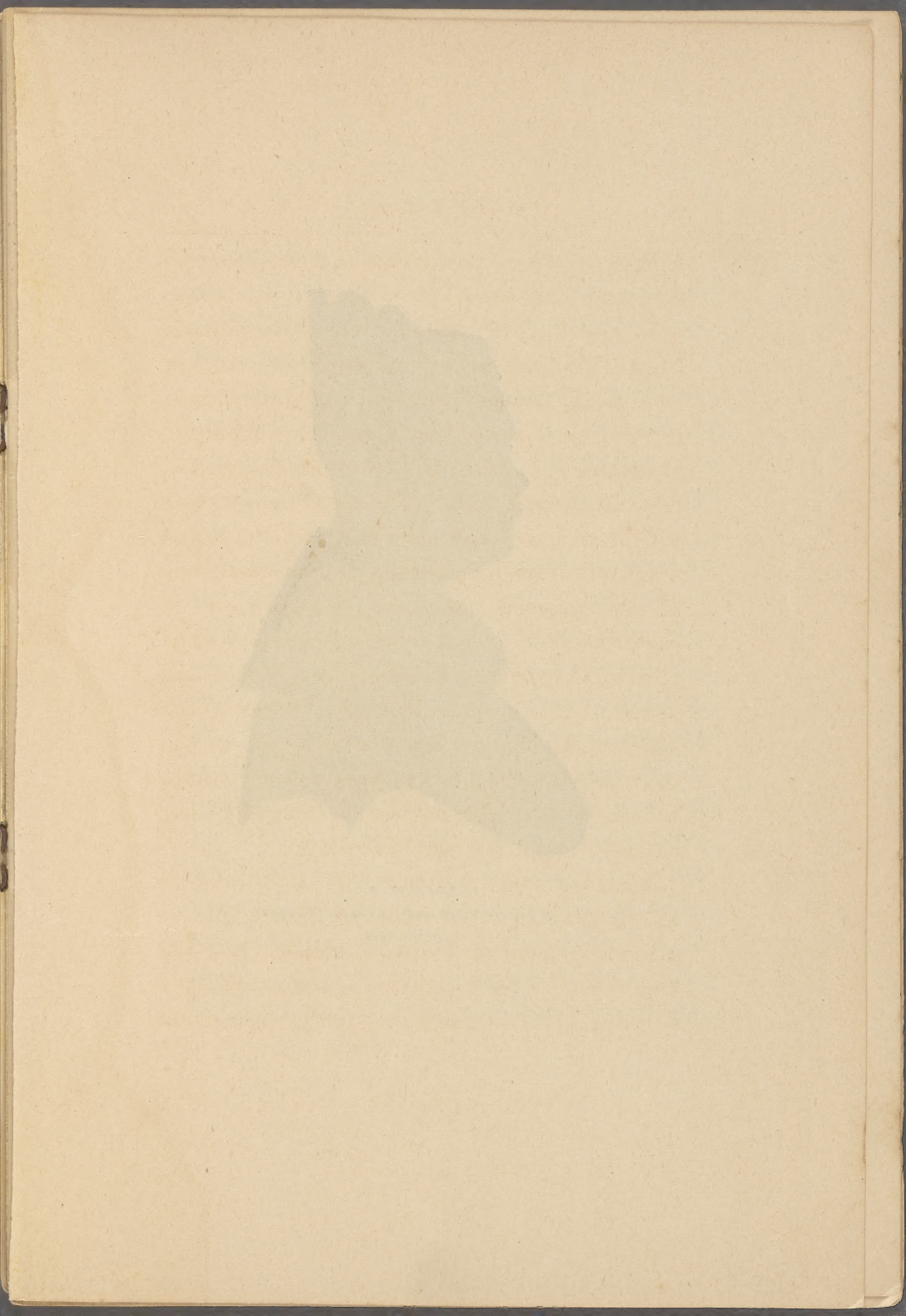
personages I knew, in the days of my childhood and youth. She lived at Kealakekua Bay, near the spot where Capt. Cook fell, twelve miles from my early home at Kailua. We had frequent visits from her and her lordly husband.

Would that I could present before you the commanding figure of Kapiolani, the majesty and love mingled in her expressive face. She was unlike any other Hawaiian woman I ever saw, truly attractive in the neatness of her dress and the refined cordiality of her manners. We welcomed her visits as those of a beloved Christian sister. She came from her home either in a well manned double canoe, or with a train of attendants on horseback, always riding on a side-saddle. Her words of affectionate greeting came from the fulness of her heart, and we cherished for her a childlike fondness bestowed upon no other native. Rev. Sereno Bishop, then a boy in his father's house at Kailua, testifies, that she was the only Hawaiian woman he ever saw, who was thoroughly attractive in person and manners, to himself as a child. No one could

look upon her, without feeling that she belonged to Nature's aristocracy.

In her dress she adopted the style brought by the first missionary ladies. Her hair was becomingly arranged with side puffs, and a high tortoise shell comb, which was the admiration of our childish eyes. Her feet were always clad in stockings and shoes. She always seated herself in a chair with ease and grace. She employed a native woman of natural skill, taught by one of the missionary ladies to make dresses in American style. On public occasions, or when visiting away from home, she wore a tight fitting dress, not even adopting the "*holoku*," (or "Mother Hubbard,") which afterwards became the national style. Silk and satin of the gayest colors were the chosen dress of the chiefs, but she preferred grave and quiet shades.

Kapiolani rigidly adopted the so called "*extreme views*" of my mother, in regard to any social intercourse, between natives and the children of mission families. Her keen eyes detected any communication even by signs, from





KAPIOLANI:
A SILHOUETTE MADE BY MRS. TAYLOR,
JUNE, 1839.

any member of her retinue. The standard in her own mind of propriety and purity was like an intuition born of the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit.

At the age of eighteen, I learned to cut silhouette profiles. I prepared one of Kapiolani, in which was shewn an outline quite different from the common Hawaiian type of upturned, upper lip.

In a letter from my father to the Secretary of the A. B. C. F. M., he thus writes, under date of 1823. "Kapiolani, Naihe and their train have several times come from their home at Kealakekua to this place, a distance of twelve miles, on horseback or by canoe, for the sake of hearing the gospel. Ever since missionaries arrived, Kapiolani has constantly been situated near them, and for nearly two years has listened to the words of eternal life in her own language. In consequence of her being separated from the other chiefs, Kalaimoku asked her by letter, 'if she were not *lonely*?' Her reply was, 'Lonely? No. If I am separated from my friends, *here is God*,

and with Him I have communion. Besides, on these shores there are two 'Gates of Heaven,' (alluding to this meeting house, and the one they are building at Kealakekua), in consequence of which, blessings will descend."

Kapiolani and other chiefs gave an address at the dedication of the immense thatched building, erected by Gov. Adams at Kailua, which contained 5,000 people. It was 180 feet long, and 78 broad. Thousands of people were employed in its erection. Timbers were hewn in the mountain forests, drawn by hand four miles to the sea, and then floated six miles to Kailua. My father went himself and spent ten days with these workers, sharing their food, and sleeping like them on the ground, with a stone for a pillow.

In the year 1823, my mother thus describes a voyage from Honolulu to Kailua, containing incidents little thought of or anticipated, when bidding farewell to American friends in Boston.

"We again embarked on a native vessel. Naihe and Kapiolani were on board, and extended

over us a parental care. We were always invited, and usually partook with them, at their meals. To be sure, the style and manner were not altogether such as would satisfy a fastidious taste and appetite. When the faithful, half-clad servant so kindly cleansed a bowl on the flap of his only garment, in which to prepare some tea, lading in the brown sugar with unsparing hand, and crumbing in the sea-bread with his teeth, I could not do else than receive and drink it, saying nothing for conscience's sake.

"The mission were only allowed to remain at the Islands, as long as their conduct approved itself to the King and Chiefs. To refuse such attention from the steward, who was commanded to be very kind to the '*wahine haole*,' might be a fatal mistake."

"We were accommodated in the cabin. It is impossible to tell how often the pipe came along, passed from hand to hand, from lip to lip, till the room became perfumed with all that is odorous in tobacco smoke, issuing from their mouths as from a chimney. Then the con-

tainers for food were brought in, and the most nauseating messes of fish were laid open. Then the annoying cockroaches gathered in swarms around every corner of my berth, now and then taking such liberties as made me start. During the night, the natives kept dropping in, till the cabin was crowded. With dead lights closed, so much heat and confined air, it seemed almost suffocating. Such were the circumstances in which we were called to resign ourselves to seasickness; such the state in which two little ones were demanding care and sympathy by day and by night. I survived the voyage. After being out four dreadful nights, we reached Lahaina. It was as the haven of rest, for I was almost exhausted. Mr. Richards pronounced me as looking more ill than when on a bed of sickness. But again we exchanged the kind attentions of friends, for the trial of the vessel. To reach it, we were necessarily accommodated in a single canoe. Mr. Thurston took charge of the elder child and the younger fell to me. On my first entering the canoe, my feet became completely





OHELO BERRIES:

Vaccinium reticulatum.

SACRED TO THE GODDESS PELE.

drenched with salt water. A piece of wood that crossed the top, I accepted as a seat, and thankful I was that my strength held out thus to poise myself, and retain my grasp of the struggling babe, until reaching the far off vessel. The next afternoon we were safely anchored off Kailua."

Kapiolani became a fearless advocate of the new religion, and it was truly surprising to see with what eagerness and interest she sought to impress her subjects with her own convictions of truth.

In the year 1824 she determined to break the spell of the belief in Pele, the dread goddess of the volcano. For this purpose she made a journey of nearly one hundred miles to the great crater of Kilauea, chiefly on foot. She forbade her attendants to give the customary offering of "*ohelo*" berries to the goddess, and even ate them in defiance of Pele's supposed wrath. Despite the terrified entreaties of her friends and attendants, she descended alone to the depths of the crater, saying: "*I worship Jehovah.*"

He kindled these fires. I fear not Pele." She knelt in prayer to the true God, and sang a Christian hymn. Returning without injury, she impressed her followers with this lesson of faith and of courage rarely equalled. There is now living in Honolulu a woman, whose age is supposed to be 120 years. She is nearly blind, but retains all her other senses. She well remembers this excursion to the volcano, being one of Kapiolani's close attendants.

It is impossible to express the encouragement to her teachers, derived from her fearless example.

Mrs. Dr. Judd thus describes a visit to Kapiolani.

"Kapiolani accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Rugles and ourselves into the sacred enclosure of Honaunau, an old heathen temple and house of refuge, forbidden to women in the olden time. No one but Kaahumanu had been bold enough to tread the enchanted ground. Naihe, her stern and lordly husband, sometimes rebukes her audacity in tampering with ancient usages and

superstitions. One reason may be, that he was the guardian of those old tombs of kings and chieftains, which is an honorable and a sacred trust."

"The high rocky bluff, just back of their house at Kealakekua, where Capt. Cook fell, is full of caves where a line of old warrior kings are sleeping. One bright day, when Mrs. Ruggles and I were alone with Kapiolani, we sat down and watched the movements of a crazy woman who had climbed the precipice, and spent the day in passing in and out of the different caves, and in airing and throwing down those secreted treasures of centuries. We expected she would fall and be dashed to pieces, as the giddy height she attained appeared inaccessible to other than ærial beings."

"What was our surprise, just after lamplight, to see her enter the door, and deposit at Naihe's feet, a large bundle, done up in black kapa. 'Here it is,' she said, 'I have been busy all day airing your property.' He gave her a blow with his cane, and demanded how she dared to

venture into such a *tabu* place, and bade her restore every thing as she found it the next day."

"Kapiolani watched the proceedings in silence for a few moments, and then whispered to Mr. Ruggles and myself to interfere with the decision of her husband. 'Let us see what is in the mysterious bundle, she said.' 'It is of no use to the dead.' Naihe gave the bundle a push with his cane, adding, 'Do what you like with it.'"

"Our curiosity was greatly excited while Dr. Judd removed the wrappings of *kapa*. First came a hideous idol, with staring eyes and grinning teeth of white pearl shell, and a tuft of human hair on the top of the head. (When a child, I was so frightened by the sudden appearance of a similar idol, that I burst through the cloth partition, and rushed under the bed in the next room). Then another smaller idol, less hideous, of similar workmanship. These were household gods, and buried with their proprietors. 'Send them to your friends in America' said Kapiolani, 'and tell them such were our gods before you sent us the Bible.' Kapiolani

was very much excited, and after the crazy crone was disposed of, and the treasures distributed among her guests, she entertained us with stories and incidents of her childhood. Bananas and various kinds of fruit were forbidden to women, under the old system. One day she resolved to taste the banana, and risk the consequences, if detected. Another girl was with her of equal rank and years. They concealed the fruit, and rushed into the sea to bathe, and to eat the forbidden fruit. An eagle eyed priest discovered them. They were tried and condemned to suffer the penalty, unless suitable expiation should be made. The priest suggested the sacrifice of a little boy, a favorite page of Kapiolani. He was immediately seized and carried to the sacred enclosure of Honaunau, and was seen no more."

"Kapiolani called for the same old priest to come and sit by her, and say what he *now* thought of such proceedings. 'O,' said he, 'those were dark days, though we priests knew better all the time. It was power we sought over the minds of the people, to influence and control them.'

Kapiolani asked him what he did with the boy. 'He was strangled on the altar,' said he. She hid her face with her hands and wept. 'O why did not Christians come sooner, and teach us better things?'

To show her advance in Christian civilization, I will quote an account of a visit made, in the year 1829, by the Rev. Mr. Stewart, Chaplain of the U. S. S. Vincennes, to the scenes of his early mission in 1822.

"At midday we came to anchor in the memorable Bay of Kealakekua. I was one of the number who went ashore with the party, landing in front of Naihe's dwelling, on the very spot where the unfortunate Cook perished. From a lofty and spacious thatched building, inclosed with a neat court, by a palisade fence and painted gate, our noble friend Kapiolani was seen issuing, in the dress and with the air of a dignified matron at home, her face, at all times amiable and benignant, beaming with joy, as, with outstretched arms, and tears starting in her eyes, she welcomed us with the customary *aloha*,—

aloha!' repeated again and again, in a tone of kindness and warmth that proved it to come from a bosom filled with hospitality and every generous affection."

"This chief, more than any other, perhaps, has won our respect and sincere friendship. She is so intelligent, so amiable, so lady-like in her whole character, that no one can become acquainted with her without feelings of more than ordinary interest and respect; and from all we had known of her, we were not surprised to find the establishment she dwells in, equal, if not superior to any we had before seen—handsomely arranged, well furnished and neatly kept; with a sitting room, or hall, in which a nobleman in such a climate, might be happy to lounge; and bed-rooms adjoining, where, in addition to couches, which the most fastidious would unhesitatingly occupy, we found mirrors and toilet tables fitted for the dressing room of a modern belle."

"It was near tea-time, and in the center of the hall, on a large table was laid a handsome ser-

vice of China. After a short walk in the hamlet, we surrounded it, with greater delight than I had before experienced, in observing the improvement that has taken place in the domestic and social habits of the chiefs. Kapiolani presided at the tea-tray, and poured to us as good a cup of that grateful beverage, as would have been furnished in a parlor at home; while her husband, at the opposite end, served, to those who chose to partake of them, in an equally easy and gentleman-like manner, a pork steak, and mutton chop, with nicely fried wheaten cakes. A kind of *jumble*, composed principally of eggs, sugar, and wheat flour, completed the entertainment. After the removal of these, a salver with a bottle of muscadine wine, glasses, and a pitcher of water, was placed on the hospitable board. And every day we remained, similar generous entertainment was spread before various parties from our ship. With the exception of our ship's company, there was not a white person nearer than Kailua, twelve miles distant. Kapiolani

alone was perceived evidently to be the mover and director of the whole."

"The Captain, in preparation for his departure, requested Mr. Bingham to express to Kapiolani the very great pleasure his visit to her had afforded him, and to present his warm thanks for the hospitality and kindness he had received—adding, that he had not since he left America been entertained more cordially, or felt himself more happy than under her roof."

"She was unwilling to hear even the first part of the acknowledgement; but when the closing sentiment was interpreted, her credulity became utterly shaken, and limiting the force of his remark, she said, 'that he must mean, not since he left America, but since he had been among the heathen people of Nukuhiwa, and such as the inhabitants were at Tahiti, and at this group.' Finding him, however, determined to adhere to the strength of his original expression, she replied to the whole in a pleasant manner by saying, 'that all the kindness, and all the favor of the visit had been to herself, to the king and

chiefs, and to the whole nation:—that he might have had some gratification in the visit, but he could have no happiness like theirs; '*for our happiness,*' she exclaimed, clasping her hands, and pressing them to her bosom, as she lifted her eyes to him, glistening with tears—'*our happiness is the joy of a captive just freed from his prison!*'

"I was about giving my parting salutation, when not only Naihe, but Kapiolani also said, '*Aohe maanei, aohe maanei—makai! 'No! not here,—not here—but at the seaside,*' and throwing her mantle around her, attended by her husband, she accompanied us to the surf, where, after many a warm grasp of the hand, and a tearful blessing, she remained standing on a point of rock, in bold relief amid the glare of torch light around her, exclaiming again and again as we shoved off, '*Aloha Mika Suata—aloha Mika Suata Wahine—aloha ke Kapena—aloha ke alii—' 'Love to you, Mr. Stewart—love to Mrs. Stewart—love to the captain—and love to the king!'* while her handkerchief was waved in repetition of

the expression, long after her voice was lost in the dashing of the waters, and till her figure was blended in the distance, with the group by which she was surrounded."

This description by Mr. Stewart will apply to a dinner at her house, given several years later, to Mr. Ruggles' family and our own, when we were entertained with royal hospitality. Natives stood behind the chairs of the guests, each with a beautiful *kahili*, defending us from the annoying flies. Kapiolani was indeed a "Mother in Israel."

An extract from a letter of Mrs. L. F. Judd, dated 1841, thus narrates the last scenes of her life. "Kapiolani is now in Honolulu, on a visit. She has had a cancer removed from her breast, and is rapidly improving. When the surgeons entered to perform the operation, she appeared a little fluttered and nervous, and requested a few moments to go by herself and pray. She returned, calm and dignified, took her seat, and submitted to the surgeon's knife with unflinching fortitude and firmness. No anesthetic was

administered. Her heart is so full of gratitude for the recovery of her health, she cannot be quiet a moment, and wants to enlist all hearts in a song of praise."

"*Later.* How can I write the sad sequel. Our noble Kapiolani was attacked with erysipelas from a walk in the hot sun, and died very suddenly!"

Rev. C. Forbes said at her death, "the nation has lost one of its brightest ornaments. She was confessedly the most decided Christian, the most civilized in her manners, and the most thoroughly read in the Bible, of all the chiefs the nation ever had; and it is saying no more than the truth, to assert, that her equal in these respects is not to be found in the nation."

What amount of money, or of privation, I ask, can be balanced against the redemption of such a character as Kapiolani? She proved a royal helper in the work of teaching her nation the difference between idolatry and Christianity.

She has gone to her shining reward! Amid the delights of the Heavenly World, she doubt-

less retains her strong sympathy for her race,
and gladly welcomes every Hawaiian who join
the throng of the Redeemed.

Aloha ino ia Kapiolani!

Blessed will be the day, when *we* shall receive
her loving greeting, among the thousands who
have gone up from the shores of Hawaii, to sit
down in the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour.

KAPIOLANI.

BY ALFRED LORD TENNYSON.

When from the terrors of nature a people
Have fashioned and worshipped a Spirit of Evil,
Blest be the voice of the teacher who calls to them,

‘Set yourselves free!’

Noble the Saxon who hurled at his idol
A valorous weapon in olden England!
Great, and greater, and greatest of women,
Island heroine, Kapiolani,
Clomb the mountain, and flung the berries,
And dared the Goddess, and freed the people
Of Hawaii!

This people,—believing that Pele the Goddess,
Would swallow in fiery riot and revel
On Kilauea,

Libbie. Jan. 23, 1918 / 171

Dance in a fountain of flame with her devils,
Or shake with her thunders and shatter her island,

Rolling her anger

Through blasted valley and flowing forest
In blood-red cataracts down to the sea !

Long as the lava light glares from the lava lake,

Dazing the starlight;

Long as the silvery vapor in day light
Over the mountain floats, will the glory
Of Kapiolani be mingled with either

On Hawaii.

What said her Priesthood ?

“ Woe to this island if ever a woman should handle
Or gather the berries of Pele ! Accursed were she !
And woe to this island if ever a woman
Should climb to the dwelling of Pele the Goddess !

Accursed were she ! ”

One from the sunrise dawned on His people,
And slowly before Him vanished shadow-like

Gods and Goddesses,

None but the terrible Pele remaining,
As Kapiolani ascended her mountain,
Baffled her priesthood, broke the tabu,

Descended the crater,

Called on the Power adored by the Christian,
And crying, “ I dare her ! Let Pele avenge herself ! ”
Into the flame billows dashed down the berries,
And drove the demon from Hawaii !